

Attitudes for Success

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Program of Distinction Categories:

Leadership, Citizenship and Life Skills Categories

- Leadership Development
- Diversity & Inclusive Environments

Youth in Governance Categories

- Youth Decision-Making
- Youth & Adult Partnerships

Organizational Strategies Categories

- Leadership & Governance of Boards

Sources of Program Funding:

Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Program is sponsored by the Oregon State University Umatilla and Morrow County Extension 4-H Youth Development Programs. Additional support includes in-kind instructor services, transportation and chaperone support provided by 14 schools, program donations from area service groups and businesses, and foundation grants to assist with keynote speaker fees and facility rentals. In addition, each year the youth leadership board has conducted fundraisers to assist with the program budget, transportation, and luncheon fees.

Knowledge and Research Base

Umatilla and Morrow Counties have experienced a 115% increase in Hispanic population over the past 15 years. Current estimates indicate that over 16% of Umatilla and 24% of Morrow County residents are of Hispanic heritage (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). This rapid change in population structure has resulted in numerous challenges for the region. Many of the local schools presently have Hispanic student enrollment as high as 53% and experience 13.9% dropout rates, twice the state average (Umatilla/Morrow Education Service District, 2004). Failure to succeed in academics predicts deviant peer association, substance use and serious delinquent behavior (Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004).

Studies have shown that few Hispanics are involved in school or community leadership opportunities, and more than 20 percent live at or below the poverty level (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1999). Leadership skills are considered to be an essential element for young people to feel satisfaction and the ability to contribute to society (Scheer, 1997). Unfortunately, opportunities to develop leadership skills are not readily available for many at-risk youth (Hobbs, 1999).

Needs Assessment

In 1990 a coalition of county agencies, parents, and youth met with local 4-H Agents to review the needs of area Hispanic families and develop strategies to provide positive experiences for these individuals. The coalition determined that programs to reduce the local 30% Hispanic dropout rate would be a priority (Umatilla/Morrow Education Service District, 1989). The coalition also identified the need for Hispanics to learn about community leadership and college opportunities.

One of the outcomes of these community conversations was the development of the Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Program. The program consists of two separate parts: (1) an annual daylong leadership/college preparation conference for Hispanic youth in grades 6-12 and (2) a youth leadership board experience that provides intensive leadership opportunities for a smaller number of program participants on a monthly basis. Hispanic mentors gain leadership skills by serving as program advisors, workshop instructors, exhibitors and chaperones with the program.

Goals and Objectives

- Encourage Hispanics to complete high school and further their education
- Assist Hispanics in developing the skills and confidence to become committed and involved in their schools and community as leaders
- Encourage Hispanic students to serve on a youth leadership board and to communicate the program offerings to their peers
- Enhance self-esteem, communication skills and leadership abilities
- Increase awareness of scholarship and career opportunities

Target Audience

This program is designed to serve 350 Hispanic youth in grades 6-12 representing 14 schools from 10 communities in rural Eastern Oregon on an annual basis. Adult volunteers representing a diverse background are recruited to serve as Youth Leadership Board members, program instructors, exhibitors, chaperones and mentors.

Program Design and Content

Type of Program

The theme Attitudes for Success embraces the challenge of meeting the educational and leadership needs of Hispanic students. The program encourages participants to understand the importance of completing high school and college, as well as fostering an awareness that Hispanics can and should become involved in their community.

Methods used to deliver the program

The Youth Leadership Board plays a large role in ensuring the success of the conference as well as helping to integrate Hispanic youth as leaders in their schools and communities. Members of this board include two to three Hispanic youth from each of the partner schools, school professionals, parents, migrant education staff, business leaders and local 4-H Extension staff. The youth members are in grades 6-12 and are nominated to serve on the board by their school counselors.

Youth who participate on the board receive a more intensive leadership experience than youth who only attend the conference. The Youth Leadership Board meets monthly to receive leadership training and provide advice for the upcoming

conference. Board members survey their peers for potential workshop topics, identify potential conference speakers and assist in overall program design and operation. Board members serve as workshop facilitators at the annual Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Conference and recruit student members to serve in leadership roles. The Youth Leadership Board actively engages in developing school diversity clubs, conducting fundraising events for the program and sponsoring information sessions to help educate the public about the Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Program.

Student officers manage the Youth Leadership Board under the guidance of Oregon State University 4-H Extension faculty. The program utilizes modules from *Youth in Governance – A Board/Committee Member Curriculum (1994)* developed by the Community Partnerships with Youth, Inc. and lessons from *Leadership: Skills You Never Outgrow (1987)* developed by the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service. Topics of monthly sessions include: Meeting Management Techniques, Parliamentary Procedure, Project Planning, Decision Making, Communication Skills, and Get Acquainted Activities.

- The Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Conference is a daylong event for youth in grades 6-12 held at a regional Convention Center. More than 350 youth are selected to attend the conference. Due to facility space restrictions, partner schools are assigned a delegate quota based on school enrollment. Conference delegates are nominated by their respective school faculty and must have parent approval to attend the event. The seven-hour event includes a series of educational workshops, a motivational keynote speaker, and exhibits from area colleges, technical training schools, military branches, corporate sponsors and public health agencies.

Curricula and/or educational materials

Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Conference Instructors and Exhibitors Workshop topics are determined by the Youth Leadership Board with input from participating schools and reviews of past program evaluations. Each year over 45 workshop instructors, exhibitors and guest speakers are invited to participate in the conference by the 4-H Department. Instructors are considered to be experts in their fields and generally supply their own curriculum. Many of the instructors have participated in the Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Conference for nine or more years. Examples of past workshop sessions are noted below:

Workshop Topic	Instructors
Leadership & Community Action	Elected Officials/Community Leaders
Keep Options Open/Goal Setting	Business Managers/Directors
Communicating Your Feelings	Counselors/Motivational Speakers
Preparing for College	College Admission Advisors/Students
Preparing for High School	School Guidance Counselors
History and Heritage	History Instructors
Career Exploration	Guidance Counselors/Job Trainers
Roles & Responsibilities as Citizens	Elected Officials/Hispanic Center
Refusal Skills/Teen Health Issues	Health Professionals

Partnerships or collaborations

Program Partners	Partner Role
14 Area Middle and High Schools	Select Student Delegates & Chaperones, Youth Leadership Board Members, Fund Raising, Workshop Instructors, Transportation
18 Northwest Colleges/Trade Schools	Workshop Instructors and Exhibitors
Military Branches	Workshop Instructors and Exhibitors
Area Business Leaders & Community Leadership	Workshop Instructors, Exhibitors, Keynote Speakers, Funding
Corporate Sponsors	Funding, Workshop Instructors, Exhibits
Morrow/Umatilla County Extension Service	Manage Program, Evaluation, Youth Leadership Board, Fund Development, Conduct Workshops, Publicize, Recruit Volunteers
Oregon State University Foundation	Fund Development and Promotion
Social Service Agencies	Workshop Instructors, Exhibitors, Youth Leadership Board Members, Keynote Speakers

Program Evaluation:

Process

Evaluation of the Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Program includes the following:

- (1) An assessment of the overall impact of the conference on the student's likelihood to attend college and becoming involved in leadership roles
- (2) An assessment of the leadership experiences of the Youth Leadership Board
- (3) Review of program content, workshops, schedule and appeal to youth

An additional component of the program evaluation is a learning assessment survey that utilizes a retrospective pre-test methodology. A Likert-type scale of 1-5 is used, with "1" indicating "not true at all" and "5" indicating "very true." A paired t-test is used to analyze the change in scores of middle school and high school delegates noting changes in knowledge from before the conference to after. In all cases the mean score has been significantly greater after attending the conference ($p. < .05$).

Evaluation Ratings of what was Gained by Participating in Conference				
ABOUT LEADERSHIP:	<u>Middle School</u>		<u>High School</u>	
	Before	After	Before	After
	Change		Change	
Understands the responsibilities of being a leader	3.60 0.9	4.50	3.70 0.83	4.53
Understands how to take leadership role at home, school and in the community	3.50 0.7	4.20	3.60 0.86	4.50
Understands how to work as a team to achieve goals	3.40 0.8	4.20	4.00 0.70	4.70
Understands that leadership is a skill developed over time	3.60 0.6	4.20	3.70 0.92	4.60
Sees that leadership skills will help you be more successful	3.40 1.1	4.50	3.80 0.88	4.30
Feels prepared to solve problems that occur	4.10 0.4	4.50	3.40 0.92	4.30
Can settle arguments in ways that are not hurtful	3.80 0.5	4.30	3.40 0.80	4.20
Is responsible for own actions	4.30 0.2	4.50	4.40 0.30	4.70
Considers how own actions affect others	4.00 0.6	4.60	4.10 0.50	4.60
Can work as a team to achieve goals	3.20 1.3	4.50	4.20 0.48	4.80
Can accept opinions different than mine	3.10 1.2	4.30	4.00 0.50	4.50
Can clearly state my thoughts, feelings & ideas to others	3.40 0.7	4.10	3.80 0.63	4.40
Has confidence in own ability to lead	3.70 0.9	4.60	3.90 0.60	4.50
Values the contributions of others	3.80 0.6	4.40	4.00 0.60	4.60
Understands being a leader is an important part of being an adult	3.20 1.1	4.30	4.30 0.40	4.70

ABOUT COLLEGE:	<u>Middle School</u>		<u>High School</u>	
	Before Change	After	Before Change	After
Attending college is important to me	3.80 1.0	4.80	4.60 0.20	4.80
Understands what they need to do to apply for college	3.70 1.0	4.70	3.70 0.88	4.60
Is interested in learning about college opportunities	4.10 0.5	4.60	4.20 0.55	4.80
Knows how to look up college information	3.50 0.8	4.30	3.50 1.00	4.50
Feels that their family will support their decision to attend college	4.10 0.8	4.90	4.30 0.42	4.70
Feels confident in their ability to apply to college	4.10 0.7	4.80	3.90 0.80	4.70

When asked open-ended questions about the most important things learned in the Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Program youth responded with answers such as:

"I learned it doesn't matter what color your skin is – you can be a success."

"I learned that Hispanic people can do something in life."

"I learned how to help more in my community."

"I learned where to find jobs and what I should do to prepare for life."

"I learned that I can go to college."

"I learned the importance of college – I wasn't sure before."

"It is very important to graduate from high school and more important to graduate from college."

"Leadership is important."

Outcome and Impacts

In total, more than 4,300 Hispanic youth have participated in the program and 520 Hispanic students have served as committee officers, workshop facilitators and youth leadership board members. When students were asked to measure the overall effectiveness of the program 86% reported that the Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Program helped them gain leadership skills and 95% indicated that attending the program helped them to be more likely to attend college.

Although the program was originally designed for Hispanic youth, it has had a strong impact on the entire region. Hispanic parents are more aware of the benefits of their children completing their high school education and advancing to higher education opportunities. This change is crucial as gaining parental support for their children's educational future appears to be one of the factors involved in the likelihood of Hispanic youth completing high school and college (Franklin & Soto, 2002).

In addition, conference participants in five communities have developed multi-cultural leadership clubs in their schools in an effort to enhance diversity efforts. And finally, many of the former program graduates who have gone on to college return to the program to speak to their younger peers about the impact of

the Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Program and the importance of education. The program has proven to be so positive that participating schools provide student release time, pay for busing and provide faculty support in order for youth to attend the event. The willingness of school administration to budget support for this program is significant.

Communication to Stakeholders

Program evaluation results are shared in an annual publication with school administrators, advisory board members, conference instructors, parents, county directors, local press and donors. Oral and poster sessions have been conducted at local, state and national events for community members and youth educators. Local press is invited to the event and allowed to interview student leadership. The conference has been publicized in area newspapers and regional television coverage. Each year, city and county political leaders are invited to the event to discuss the importance of leadership and community involvement by all citizens.

Program Sustainability

Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Program has been successfully conducted for 16 years with continued support from Hispanic families, area schools and businesses within the two counties. Many of the youth participate in the program for a minimum of three years and 80% of the workshop instructors and exhibitors have volunteered at least nine years for the program. Program participants have organized and implemented community fundraisers to defray the cost of the Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Conference. Corporate sponsorships and grants defray the cost of the Convention Center rental, keynote speaker fees, and workshop material. County 4-H staff implemented the program through their base programming efforts.

Replication

As the Hispanic population continues to grow in the nation, programs similar to Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Program will meet a critical need for many communities. Evaluation results and participant testimonials clearly validate the effectiveness of this program in reaching out to strengthen underserved youth and families.

Program development guidelines and consultations have been shared with communities across the nation. The program has been highlighted on a statewide telecast and in several publications. Poster sessions and seminars have been conducted at national, regional, and state conferences to help replicate the program. The program has received the 2003 National Association of Counties Multi-Cultural Diversity Award, NAE4-HA Western Regional Power of Youth Award and Oregon Epsilon Sigma Phi Diversity Award.

Rationale

Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Program helps Hispanic participants develop the skills and confidence necessary to become committed and involved in their schools and community. The program demonstrates a successful coalition model designed to reach underserved youth and families. As the Hispanic population continues to grow in the nation, similar outreach programs will meet a critical need in many of our communities.

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